



**Teacher:**

**Class: 2nd grade**

**Duration: 2 class periods**

**Course Unit:**

**Lesson Title: Visual Literacy—Story**

### LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will practice visual thinking strategies, read artworks and images as texts, and learn storytelling techniques as they create a narrative artwork based on an original story.

### STANDARDS

#### Tennessee State Standards

##### Visual Art—Grade 2

- 1.1 Use tools and media consistently in a safe and responsible manner.
- 1.2 Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of techniques.
- 1.3 Explore a variety of processes.
- 1.4 Recognize and demonstrate levels of craftsmanship.
- 2.1 Identify, understand, and apply the elements of art.
- 3.1 Select subject matter, symbols, and ideas for the student’s own art.
- 3.2 Analyze subject matter, symbols, and ideas in the student’s own art.
- 6.2 Understand connections between visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum.

#### Common Core Connections for Integrated Subjects—Language Arts, Speaking & Listening

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1** Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why* and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.\*

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2** Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.3** Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1a** Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1b** Build on others’ talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.2** Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text\* read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

\*Image as text

## OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to interpret and to express the story of an image.
2. Students will be able to create an artwork that tells a story.
3. Students will be able to explain how the details of their artwork help tell a story.

## ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

1. Students will be evaluated on their ability to interpret the story of an image based on details they've observed.
2. Students will be evaluated on the coherence of their written story and its connection to the artwork.

## MATERIALS

- A PC-to-projector connection
- One 11" x 17" sheet of drawing paper per student
- 1 pencil per student
- 1 black marker or pen per student
- 1 sheet of notebook paper per student
- Several colored pencils per student
- 4–6 digital images of artworks that convey a clear narrative or action, including but not limited to works by Red Grooms (e.g., [No Gas: Aaaaaah](#)) and Keith Haring, with subject matter appropriate for this age group
- 1 copy of the Reading an Artwork worksheet per pair of students
- 1 copy of the Story-Starter worksheet per student
- An example of a complete story without words, created by the teacher ahead of time
- 1 sticky note per student

## ACTIVATING STRATEGY

1. Show students the "[Stories and Art](#)" episode of [ArtQuest: Art Is All Around You](#).
2. Ask students what they found interesting about the episode, and what questions or comments they may have on the topic of storytelling with images.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### PART 1

1. Prior to class, determine the number of workstations needed, with 3–5 students per station. Place at each station the following materials (1 per student):
  - sheet of drawing paper
  - black marker/pen
  - sheet of notebook paper
  - pencilAdd several colored pencils per student to each station.
2. Show students the artworks and run through the following visual thinking strategy regimen with each image:
  - a. What's going on in this picture?
  - b. What do you see that makes you say that?
  - c. What more can we find?
  - d. Who can identify the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* of the artwork?
3. Leave the last artwork up, and have each student pair up with a partner to complete the Reading an Artwork worksheet. Distribute the worksheets and encourage the students to come up with original answers. Emphasize that there is no single right answer to any of the questions, as long as they can back up their statements with details from the artwork. Give them 10 minutes to do this, and let a few students share their

answers to each question.

4. Tell students that they are going to write a brief story, which can be about anything. [Say:] The first step of writing your story is to create your protagonist—the main character. It can be a person or an animal. Who or what you will focus on in your story? How would you describe them? What is interesting about them? And, most important: what problem do they want to solve? Maybe they want to win a soccer game. The problem can be anything. What do they want the most? Take a minute to write a description of your protagonist on your sheet of notebook paper.
5. After a minute is up, continue the lesson. [Say:] Now that you have a protagonist, and you know what they want, it is time for you to decide whether or not they get what they want in your story. Does their problem get solved? Decide in your head: my protagonist gets what they want, or they don't.
6. Distribute a "Story-Starter" worksheet to each student. [Say:] You are going to start your story by describing the setting—the world in which your character lives. Think of the 5 senses. What are they? What do people smell and hear and see in your story? Add lots of details to build the world in your imagination and make it seem real for your reader. There are no bad ideas, just ideas without enough detail. You have 5 minutes to write the beginning of your story by describing the setting. Put it on the first page of the worksheet I just gave to you, and use lots of details as you continue to write.
7. When 10 minutes are up, continue the lesson. [Say:] Now it's time to introduce the problem in your story. What does your protagonist want and why do they want it? Did someone take away all of their shoes? Did it rain on the day they were supposed to go to the park? Has an army of flying sharks invaded their town? Take 5 minutes to describe what happens to your protagonist. Did they make a mistake that led to the problem they are trying to solve? Remember, there are no bad ideas. You can always change it later, and it doesn't have to be perfect.
8. When 10 minutes have passed, tell students that they have finished writing the beginning of the story, and now they are going to write the middle. Assure them that it's okay if they are already thinking about what's going to happen at the end. [Say:] Take 10 minutes to describe the action of the story in this middle part: what does your protagonist do to solve their problem and get what they want? Does your protagonist investigate a mystery? Do they go on an adventure? Do they make more mistakes? Do they build a powerful machine? Do they learn to tap dance? Do they start their own business? You decide what happens!
9. When 10 minutes have passed, tell students that they are done with the middle of their story, and that now it is time to write the end. [Say:] How will your story end? Will your protagonist get what they want? Will there be a compromise? Will everyone live happily ever after? How does it all go? Describe your story's ending so that your protagonist learns something or is tested, and tell us how the story's problem is solved. You have 10 minutes to write the end of your story. Ready, set, go!
10. When 10 minutes are up, tell students to cover up their stories. [Say:] Don't show anyone your stories yet. We will share them later, but first, you are going to retell your story, in pictures.

## **PART 2**

1. Show students your premade example and see if they can guess the story.
2. [Say:] Your challenge is to tell *your* story without using any words. You can use only visual details, like the ones we have been analyzing in the artworks we looked at earlier. You will tell your story in 3 frames, like 3 panels in a comic book: 1 picture for the beginning, 1 picture for the middle, and 1 picture for the end.
3. Show students how to fold their sheets of drawing paper into thirds, and how to use their black markers or pens to draw lines to separate the 3 panels.
4. [Say:] You have 10 minutes to draw the first picture. Before you start drawing, reread the beginning of your story and think about what you see in your mind as you read. Then use your pencils to draw your protagonist or your setting, or both.
5. As students draw, prompt them to think back to the artwork of Red Grooms. Ask them the following questions as you walk around:
  - a. How will you display the setting?
  - b. What detail will identify your protagonist? (A yellow hat? Ruby-red slippers?) Look at the description of your protagonist you wrote on your notebook paper.
  - c. Is your protagonist inside or outside?
  - d. What will they be doing?

- e. In what action will you pose your protagonist?
  - f. In what position will their body be?
  - g. Are there any other people around?
  - h. Who is looking at whom?
  - i. What are they saying?
  - j. How can you show what they are saying and feeling?
  - k. What details can you draw to show the details you wrote in your story?
  - l. How can you represent a sound? A smell?
  - m. What objects are present in your story? How can you draw them?
  - n. How can you show what your protagonist is going to do with those objects?
6. Let students know when the 10 minutes are up. [Say:] Good job, everyone. You have 1 minute to add 2 more details. Ready, set, go!
  7. Next, have students reread the middle portion of their story and take 10 minutes to draw a picture in the middle panel of their paper. Run through the same regimen of questions that went with the beginning picture (Step 5). Emphasize the importance of giving their protagonist the same recognizable features in both panels, with the identifying detail (such as a yellow hat or ruby-red slippers) discussed earlier.
  8. When 10 minutes are up, have students reread their story's ending and take 7 minutes to draw the third panel of their paper. Run through the same regimen of questions as above. Emphasize once again the need to depict their protagonist in a way that makes them recognizable from the first 2 panels, with the same identifying detail used in those panels.
  9. Have students pair up to see how well another person can decipher their pictures. Have the students ask each other:
    - a. What is the story told by these pictures?
    - b. What makes you say this?
    - c. What else can you find?
  10. Coach students on how to give critical feedback in a polite way, such as saying, "I think you could improve your picture if you \_\_\_\_\_." Suggestions could range from adding more detail to drawing a clearer expression on a figure's face.
  11. Give students 5 minutes to implement the feedback they've received, and to put finishing touches (such as additional color) on their pictures.
  12. Have students outline their figures and objects with their black markers or pens.
  13. Once students are finished, assign the following writing prompt: *Explain how the details of your artwork tell the same story as the one you have written. Begin with a topic sentence, in which you introduce what you have done in a way that will make sense to someone who has not been in our classroom: "Today, we \_\_\_\_\_."*

### **ALTERNATE/EXTRA ACTIVITIES**

- Students may create storytelling artworks based on stories by peers (rather than their own).
- Students can rewrite their stories after creating their illustrations and receiving peer feedback.
- Students can create a comic book to tell their stories, but without (or minimally) using words.
- Students with special needs can illustrate the beginning, middle, and end of a literacy-level targeted story.

### **CLOSURE**

1. Have students display their artwork and stories on their tables.
2. Give each student a blank sticky note and ask them to draw an arrow on it. Tell them to walk around the room to look at everyone's artwork and stories. Have them find their favorite story or artwork and identify their favorite part of the story or scene. Tell them to place their sticky note on the story or artwork, with the arrow pointing at their favorite part, for the author/artist to discover later.

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Language Arts

## EXTENDED LEARNING

### Activities:

- Heather Forest, "[A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words](#)," *Story Arts Online*, storyarts.org
- Learning Network, "[What's Going On in This Picture?](#)" *New York Times* (weekly feature), nytimes.com
- Visual Thinking Strategies, "[Grade 3-5 Year 1, Lesson 1](#)," vtsweb.org

### Article:

- Maria Popova, "[A Brief History of Children's Picture Books and the Art of Visual Storytelling](#)," *Atlantic*, February 24, 2012, theatlantic.com

### Videos:

- Linda Freeman and David Irving, [Red Grooms: Sculptoramatist](#) (2008; distributed by L&S Video)
- Frist Center for the Visual Arts, "[Stories and Art](#)," [ArtQuest: Art Is All Around You](#) (2015; available at fristkids.org)

For additional lesson plans and activities, visit us at fristkids.org. This lesson plan was created by an art education student in the Frist Center for the Visual Arts' Teaching Assistant Program under the guidance of education department staff and/or a mentor teacher. The Teaching Assistant Program is designed to introduce participants to museum education by providing unique teaching experiences in an informal learning environment. For more information about this program or other educational opportunities offered by the Frist Center, please visit fristcenter.org.



**Reading an Artwork:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Title of artwork)

**Whom** do you see in the artwork? What can you describe about them?

**What** are they doing and what is happening? (What details make you think this?)

**Where** is the artwork's action taking place? (What details make you think this?)

**When** is it taking place? (What details make you think this?)

**Why** is the artwork's action happening? (What details make you think this?)

**How** would you describe the way in which it is happening? (Cite details!)

# Story-Starter Worksheet

## The Beginning

Once upon a time, \_\_\_\_\_, who was a \_\_\_\_\_  
(Your character's name)

with a \_\_\_\_\_, lived in \_\_\_\_\_, which was surrounded  
by \_\_\_\_\_ and was filled with \_\_\_\_\_.

When he/she went \_\_\_\_\_, he/she saw \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_. He/she smelled \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_. He/she heard \_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_. He/she felt \_\_\_\_\_.

One day, \_\_\_\_\_

(Describe how the problem arises or what the protagonist wants most.)

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